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April 26, 1961

MEMO TO FILE

Call from George Derbyshire, SS8.

Committee 16 is meeting on May 6 and then again on June 3, in Washington. They will take up more detail on why man-in-space, and then in the second meeting, further review of the Mercury-Apollo program.

My position as indicated was that I was anxious to remain informed of the actions of the committee, but that I would not be able to take a very active part owing to preoccupation with other problems. This was accepted.

We missed the opportunity for a forthright position before the Gagarin flight and it would be very difficult at the present time for us to press our views on the relative insignificance of the demonstration of man in space flying. But on further reflection, perhaps this is not the right tact and one ought still to insist on an honest and consistent policy. It is rather characteristic of Russian policy that they would not take the defensive in similar circumstances, as we have perhaps done, but instead would make a very strong counterattack and perhaps this should be pressed.